

BROOKLINE COUNCIL ON AGING  
Minutes of the  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
May 8, 2013 (as amended June 12, 2013)

The Brookline Council on Aging (COA) meeting was held at the Senior Center on Wednesday, May 8, 2013, at 1:00 pm.

Present were:

- Board members: Peter Ames, Phyllis Bram, Judith Chasin, Judith Chernoff, Nancy Daly, Ruthann Dobek, Irving B. Finn, Lloyd Gellineau, Helen Lew, Claire Lurie, John Mulhane, Agnes Rogers, Miriam Sargon, Barbara Scotto, and William Wong
- Staff: Judith Gimple, Susan Kanian-Andriole, Julie Washburn, and Karin Wannamaker
- Others: Nisha Dhawlikar, Benjamin Iletto, Sherry Lee, Lourdes Iletto. T. Piwchiers, and Joe Quinn

Agnes Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm and asked for the minutes of the April 10 meeting to be approved. They were so moved by Nancy Daly, seconded, and unanimously approved.

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Mrs. Rogers then introduced the guest speaker Nisha Dhawlikar, Stepp Lab member.

The Stepp Lab for Sensorimotor Rehabilitation Engineering is part of the Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences Department at Boston University. Its research focuses on improving sensorimotor disabilities and quality of life measures through noninvasive methods.

The principle investigator of the lab is Dr. Cara Stepp who received her PhD in Biomedical Engineering at the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences & Technology and completed her Postdoctoral Fellowship in Computer Science & Engineering and Rehabilitation Medicine at University of Washington. Stepp Lab is composed of Dr. Cara Stepp, lab manager, and many undergraduate and graduate students interested in biomedical engineering and the health sciences.

One of the research projects the lab is currently working on is called FishGame and involves playing a videogame using noninvasive surface electromyograms (EMGs) and using your neck and facial muscles to play the game. You produce force with your neck muscles and move a fish avatar vertically up and down to "eat" smaller fish targets. Each game is specific to the individual participant's neck muscle activity so it is possible for everyone to succeed. No prior videogame experience is needed at all for participation. Participants include a group with Parkinson disease (PD) dysphasia and a control group of healthy elders.

Stepp Lab is currently looking for potential research participants, aged 60 and above. We compensate participants \$10/hr and the study involves coming to our lab once for about 2 to 3 hours.

There are no direct benefits from participating in the study, however. Our overall goal is to create and implement a noninvasive method to improve swallowing in people with sensorimotor disabilities. The goal of the research is to collect data on swallowing. Researchers include people interested in speech science and biomedical engineering.

If you are interested in participating, please contact the Stepp Lab, either via phone at 617-358-1395 or e-mail at [stepplab@gmail.com](mailto:stepplab@gmail.com). Stepp Lab is located at the Charles River Campus of Boston University in the Sargent College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences at 635 Commonwealth Avenue on the 6th floor.

There was a period of questions by the audience:

- Question: What is the composition of the researchers?  
Answer: Mostly undergraduates and graduate students. There is no speech therapist in the lab, but there is a speech clinician associated with the group.
- Question: What kind of research is it?  
Answer: Theoretical research in swallowing.
- Question: Can the Stepp Lab retort back on research results?  
Answer: Yes, updates will be available.
- Question: How did the lab come up the the computer game?  
Answer: Past research techniques.

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Mrs. Rogers thanked the speaker, and there was a round of applause. Mrs. Rogers then called for committee reports.

### **Springwell report—Helen Lew**

The State Budget is mostly level-funded. However, the ECOP (Enhanced Community Options Program) is being increased by \$1.5. Unfortunately, this is only half of what was asked.

There is a per senior rate of \$8. This is up from \$7 last year.

The new director is gone. More on this to come.

### **Selectmen Report—Nancy Daly**

Betsy DeWitt has been reelected as chair of the Board of Selectmen. And there is a new 5<sup>th</sup> selectman—Neil Wishinsky.

Per Barbara Scotto (School Committee member), the Town was hoping for more money for Education to help with the growing number of children in the system. This increase in the number of school system is the result of

- 1) People having larger families,
- 2) New families with children settling in Brookline and sending their children to Brookline schools,
- 3) Families moving out of the suburbs and into Metro Boston (Brookline is ideal for those who want the comforts of the suburbs coupled with the amenities of the city), and
- 4) Using the live birth data for Brookline, the schools used to expect 80% of the number of those born in any given year to enroll in kindergarten. For the last few years, the number of kindergarten enrollees has been 100% of the birth data. This doesn't mean that all of those born in any given year enroll in Brookline schools, but demographically, the numbers are equal.

At this point **Peter Ames** asked how the count tracking was achieved. **Nancy Daly and Barbara Scotto** responded that the figures were from a Brookline Community Foundation report on demographics (which can be looked up online).

### **Director's report—Ruthann Dobek and others**

First, COA board vice chair **Miriam Sargon** read some recent thank you letters regarding the Volunteer Luncheon from Mary Mindess, Toby Axelrod, and an anonymous active volunteer.

Then several upcoming changes in personnel were announced:

- Elaine Yanowitz, Clinician Social Worker, is retiring at the end of June after 23 years of service with the COA. (This will be an open position that has increased from 20 to 30 hours.)
- Vivian Freeman, Volunteer Coordinator, is also retiring after 18 years of service with the COA. (This will also be an open position—for 18 hours a week.
- Ron Gallagher, Van driver, retiring as of July 3. We will be looking for a replacement for his position for 28 hours per week.
- Karin Wannamaker—social worker on the HELP, ELF, and BrooklineCAN referral programs—will leave us in July to return to the South. Their gain is our loss.

We will miss all of these people. Ruthann announced that she would appreciate the help of any board members who wanted to be involved in the interviewing process for all of these job replacements.

Ruthann also announced that the Senior Center renovation project is about to begin now that the Board of Selectmen has approved the contract.

Julie then made announcements about upcoming programs.

- On Monday, May 13, at 1:00 pm, Sue Flanagan from BlueCross BlueShield of Massachusetts will update us on “Planning for Medicare—Countdown to 65
- On Wednesday, May 15, at 1:00 pm, Mass Bar Assn. attorney Christine Nicastro will present “Estate Planning Strategies for Baby Boomers and Beyond”
- On Wednesday, May 22, at 10:15 am the Telling Your Story writing seminar will present their annual public reading.
- On Thursday, June 6, don’t miss the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Marie Lavine Memorial Concert featuring Lauren Paris

And the Spanish Immersion Mother’s Day fundraiser has been cancelled.

The Rethink Your Health Wellness Expo on May 2 was a great success. 150-200 people attended.

The Senior Center Parking Proposals are in the works. See **Attachment A**.

**Nominating Committee**—no report. The committee will meet in August. If you have candidates to propose, let Ruthann know.

Have a Happy Mothers' Day. Don't forget it is also Lilac Sunday at the Arboretum.

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There being no additional business, Agnes Rogers called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved, seconded, and approved. The next COA meeting will be on Wednesday, June 12, at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Gimple

Attachment A: Senior Center Parking Proposals

## ATTACHMENT A

### Senior Center Parking Proposals

**Extended on-street parking for Senior Center users.** On-street parking for periods of up to four hours shall be permitted for Senior Center users on Monday through Friday between the hours of 9 AM and 4 PM on the following streets:

Winchester Street north of Coolidge Street  
Coolidge Street between Winchester Street and Harvard Street  
Thorndike Street between Winchester Street and Harvard Street  
Atherton Road

Senior Center users shall be identified by stickers on their automobiles. Brookline residents who are age 60 and over shall be eligible for stickers. Administration of the sticker program shall be the responsibility of the Transportation Department and the Council on Aging. The Town may charge a fee for stickers to defray the cost of program administration. Stickers shall be subject to periodic renewal requirements determined by the Council on Aging and the Transportation Department.

Extended parking shall be permitted only during visits to the Senior Center. Vehicles with stickers which are parked on the designated streets for other purposes shall be subject to the Town's two-hour parking limits.

**Free parking for Senior Center volunteers at Fuller Street lot.** The six parking places in the Fuller Street lot designated for Senior Center use shall be restricted in use to volunteers at the Senior Center on weekdays between 9 AM and 4 PM. Volunteers shall not be required to pay for parking in these places. Senior Center volunteers shall be identified by a document placed on the dash board of their vehicles. The administration of distribution of volunteer parking documents shall be the responsibility of the Council on Aging.

Draft 1

March 14, 2013